

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 PC-04 CU-05 AID-20 NIC-01 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /136 W

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R 070900Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7661

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3755

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PGOV PINS MY

SUBJ: MALAYSIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS: RACIAL ISSUES AND COMMUNAL
TEMPERATURE

REF: A. KL A-106, 8/8/74

B. KL 3656

1. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY OF EMBASSY REPORT (REF A) ON RACIAL
ISSUES AND COMMUNAL TEMPERATURE IN RELATIONS TO FORTHCOMING GENERAL
ELECTIONS. AIRGRAM WILL BE POUCHED ALL ADDRESSEES AUGUST 8.

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: ON MAY 13, 1969, THREE DAYS AFTER GENERAL
ELECTIONS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA, NATION WAS SHOCKED BY WIDESPREAD
COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN KUALA LUMPUR, COMPARATIVELY MINOR RACIAL
INCIDENTS IN OTHER AREAS, AND CONSEQUENT SUSPENSION OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY GOVERNMENT FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS. THE 1969 GENERAL ELECTIONS
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AND ATTENDANT RACIAL VIOLENCE, IN ALL RESPECTS A WATERSHED IN

MALAYSIAN POLITICS, COMPELLED MANY AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN POLITICAL ALIGNMENTS AND GOVT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS WHICH WILL BE TESTED AS COUNTRY GOES TO POLLS ON AUGUST 24.

3. PROSPECTS FOR COMMUNAL STABILITY FOR 1974 GENERAL ELECTIONS ARE REASONABLY GOOD. AT THIS JUNCTURE, WE WOULD RATE PROBABILITY OF SIGNIFICANT AND/OR WIDESPREAD COMMUNAL VIOLENCE, SUCH AS FOLLOWED 1969 GENERAL ELECTIONS, AT LESS THAN TEN PERCENT. POSSIBILITY ALWAYS EXISTS, HOWEVER, FOR ISOLATED RACIAL INCIDENTS AS ELECTION CAMPAIGN GOES INTO HIGH GEAR. THERE IS ALSO POTENTIAL FOR ARMED COMMUNIST TERRORIST ELEMENTS OR UNDERGROUND CADRES TO PROVOKE RACIAL INCIDENTS. GOM, HAVING LEARNED LESSON OF 1969 VERY WELL, IS ALERT TO ANY UNTOWARD DEVELOPMENTS: POLICE ARE ON FULL ALERT FOR DURATION OF ELECTION PERIOD AND ARMY, WHILE THERE HAVE BEEN NO SHIFTS OF TROOP UNITS, IS PREPARED TO ASSIST IN QUELLING ANY CIVIL DISTURBANCES THAT MAY OCCUR. ON WHOLE, IT APPEARS THAT GOM IS CAPABLE OF MANAGING ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO KEEP COMMUNAL TENSION AT MINIMUM AND MANAGEABLE LEVEL.

4. UNDERLYING STRESSES AND STRAINS BETWEEN MALAYSIA'S MALAY AND NON-MALAY COMMUNITIES CENTER IN SUCH ISSUES AS LANGUAGE, CITIZENSHIP, EDUCATION AND GOM PRO-MALAY ECONOMIC PROGRAMS. NOTWITHSTANDING GOM ATTEMPTS TO ACCOMMODATE ASPIRATIONS OF MALAY POPULATION IN ITS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, AND ITS POLITICAL OVERTURES TO NON-MALAY COMMUNITY THROUGH FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL FRONT, RACIAL ISSUES CONTINUE TO PERVADE EVERY ASPECT OF MALAYSIAN SOCIETY AND RACE IS STILL "NAME OF THE GAME" IN MALAYSIAN POLITICS. END SUMMARY.
UNDERHILL

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